

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

The following is a current listing of claims and will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application. Please amend the claims as follows:

1-68. (Cancelled)

69. (Currently Amended) A combined switch and service processor module for a modular computer system, comprising:

    a switch portion;

    a service processor portion;

    a data interface for communicating with an external management entity; and

    a fault management unit;

    wherein the fault management unit is configured to intercept fault messages generated by the switch portion and the service processor portion and to perform ~~rationalisation~~ processing on the fault messages to determine whether to forward a given message to the external management entity.

70. (Original) The combined switch and service processor module of claim 69, wherein the fault management unit is implemented within the service processor portion.

71. (Original) The combined switch and service processor module of claim 69, wherein the fault management unit stores details of fault messages received irrespective of whether the message is forwarded to the external management entity.

72. (Previously Presented) The combined switch and service processor module of claim 71, wherein the stored details of the fault messages includes data describing an action taken by the originator of the fault message in response to detection of the fault.

73. (Currently Amended) The combined switch and service processor module of claim 71, wherein the stored details of fault messages are analy[[s]]zed to determine whether any

reverstement actions are required by the originator of a given fault message when a fault repair is attempted.

74. (Currently Amended) The combined switch and service processor module of claim 69, wherein the ~~rationalisation~~ processing includes analy[[s]]zing a newly received fault message and comparing it to previously received fault messages to determine whether the newly received fault message relates to an already reported fault.

75. (Currently Amended) The combined switch and service processor module of claim 74, wherein the ~~rationalisation~~ processing further comprises not forwarding a fault message relating to a fault already reported to the management entity.

76. (Original) The combined switch and service processor module of claim 69, wherein the switch portion and service processor portion are implemented by separate hardware within the module.

77. (Original) The combined switch and service processor module of claim 69, wherein the switch portion and service processor portion are implemented by common hardware within the module.

78. (Currently Amended) The combined switch and service processor module of claim 69, wherein the service processor portion is configured to operate in master/slave relationship with a service processor portion of a further combined switch and service processor module of the modular computer system; and

wherein the service processor portion is further configured to automatically synchroni[[s]]ze management information with the service processor portion of the further combined switch and service processor via the data interface in accordance with the master/slave relationship.

79. (Previously Presented) The combined switch and service processor module of claim 69, wherein the switch and service processor portions are each configured to communicate with the

external management entity to obtain a unique address within a computing environment into which the modular computer system is connected.

80. (Previously Presented) The combined switch and service processor module of claim 69, wherein the service processor portion has a user interface configured to receive and forward communications between the external management entity and the switch portion.

81. (Previously Presented) The combined switch and service processor module of claim 69, wherein the switch and service processor portions are each configured to create a unique identifier using data unique to the respective portions; and

wherein the service processor portion is configured to supply the service processor portion's unique identifier to the switch.

82. (Currently Amended) A computer system comprising:  
a combined switch and service processor module, comprising:  
a switch portion;  
a service processor portion;  
a data interface for communicating with an external management entity; and  
a fault management unit;  
wherein the fault management unit is configured to intercept fault messages generated by the switch portion and the service processor portion and to perform ~~rationalisation~~ processing on the fault messages to determine whether to forward a given message to the external management entity.

83-85. (Cancelled)

86. (Currently Amended) A method of operating a combined switch and service processor module for a modular computer system, the combined switch and service processor module having: a switch portion; a service processor portion; a data interface for communicating with an external management entity; and a fault management unit; the method comprising:

operating the fault management unit to intercept fault messages generated by the switch portion and the service processor portion and to perform ~~rationalisation~~ processing on the fault messages to determine whether to forward a given message to the external management entity.

87. (New) The computer system of claim 82, wherein the fault management unit is implemented within the service processor portion.

88. (New) The computer system of claim 82, wherein the fault management unit is further configured to store details of fault messages received irrespective of whether the message is forwarded to the external management entity.

89. (New) The computer system of claim 87, wherein the stored details of the fault messages include data describing an action taken by the originator of the fault message in response to detection of the fault.

90. (New) The computer system of claim 87, wherein the fault management unit is further configured to analyze the stored details of fault messages to determine whether any reversement actions are required by the originator of a given fault message when a fault repair is attempted.

91. (New) The computer system of claim 82, wherein the fault management unit is further configured to analyze a newly received fault message and compare it to previously received fault messages to determine whether the newly received fault message relates to an already reported fault.

92. (New) The computer system of claim 91, wherein the fault management unit is further configured to not forward a fault message relating to a fault already reported to the management entity.

93. (New) The computer system of claim 82, wherein the service processor portion is configured to operate in master/slave relationship with a service processor portion of a further combined switch and service processor module of the computer system; and

wherein the service processor portion is further configured to automatically synchronize management information with the service processor portion of the further combined switch and service processor via the data interface in accordance with the master/slave relationship.

94. (New) The method of claim 86, wherein the fault management unit is implemented within the service processor portion.

95. (New) The method of claim 86, further comprising the fault management unit storing details of fault messages received irrespective of whether the message is forwarded to the external management entity.

96. (New) The method of claim 95, wherein the stored details of the fault messages includes data describing an action taken by the originator of the fault message in response to detection of the fault.

97. (New) The method of claim 95, further comprising the fault management unit analyzing the stored details of fault messages to determine whether any reversement actions are required by the originator of a given fault message when a fault repair is attempted.

98. (New) The method of claim 86, further comprising the fault management unit analyzing a newly received fault message and comparing it to previously received fault messages to determine whether the newly received fault message relates to an already reported fault.

99. (New) The method of claim 98, further comprising the fault management unit not forwarding a fault message relating to a fault already reported to the management entity.

100. (New) The method of claim 86, further comprising operating the service processor portion in master/slave relationship with a service processor portion of a further combined switch and service processor module of the modular computer system; and

the service processor portion automatically synchronizing management information with the service processor portion of the further combined switch and service processor via the data interface in accordance with the master/slave relationship.

101. (New) The combined switch and service processor module of claim 69, wherein the switch portion is configured to:

detect a fault in an information processing module coupled to the switch portion; in response to detecting a fault in the information processing module:

disable the network port of the information processing module; and  
convey a corresponding fault message to the fault management unit.

102. (New) The computer system of claim 82, wherein the switch portion is configured to: detect a fault in an information processing module coupled to the switch portion;

in response to detecting a fault in the information processing module:

- disable the network port of the information processing module; and
- convey a corresponding fault message to the fault management unit.

103. (New) The method of claim 86, further comprising:

- the switch portion detecting a fault in an information processing module;
- in response to the detecting:
  - the switch portion disabling the network port of the information processing module; and
  - the switch portion conveying a corresponding fault message to the fault management unit.